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United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme
First session
Nairobi, 23–27 June 2014

Science-policy interface

Draft resolution submitted by the Committee of the Whole

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 66/288 of July 2012 on the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), entitled "The future we want", specifically its paragraph 88, and recalling also Governing Council decision 27/2, paragraph 8,

Mindful of the functions and responsibilities of the United Nations Environment Programme as outlined in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, including to keep under review the world environmental situation, and recalling Governing Council decision 27/11 of 22 February 2013 on the state of the environment and contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to meeting substantive environmental challenges,

Acknowledging General Assembly resolution 66/288 of July 2012 on the Rio+20 outcome document, entitled "The future we want", in particular its paragraph 90, calling for strengthened assessment activities and improved access to data and information, and noting the need to integrate the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development and to disseminate and share evidence-based environmental information on critical and emerging economic, environmental and social issues,

Recalling Governing Council decision 27/11, section III, paragraph 3,

Recognizing the potential benefits of a scientifically sound and evidence-based detailed assessment of the state of the environment for awareness-raising, informed policy formulation and decision-making in the context of sustainable development,

Welcoming the progress made during the design and development of UNEP Live as a tool to significantly enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the future approach to keeping the world environment situation under review, including capacity-building and technology support for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to improve their data collection and assessment efforts and ensure that data collected and information generated are made available to policymakers and the public,

Recalling paragraph 88 (f) of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and paragraph 20 of Governing Council decision 27/2 calling for the enhancement of the operationalization of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building,

Recognizing that there are gaps in our knowledge of the state of the environment resulting from a lack of current data and information generation and dissemination,

Noting that there is an urgent need for Governments to take action to bridge those gaps through the building of capacities, the strengthening of existing mechanisms, including those of the multilateral environmental agreements, for monitoring the state of the environment and producing policy relevant environmental assessments, which should be based on the use of established comparable methods for data collection and analysis, paying particular attention to the needs and circumstances of developing countries.

Welcoming the continued support provided by the United Nations Environment Programme to the work of the intergovernmental scientific panels, bodies and processes,

Expressing appreciation for the work of the International Resource Panel, which contributes to the strengthening of the science-policy interface and knowledge base in key areas of resource use and knowledge management,

Welcoming the release of the third Africa Environment Outlook (AEO-3) report, which reveals important linkages between health and the environment in Africa,

Welcoming also the release of the Arab Region Atlas of Our Changing Environment, which examines the environmental changes that have taken place across the Arab region,

Science-policy interface

1. *Welcomes* the briefing of the Executive Director on science-policy interface to the high-level segment of the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and requests the Executive Director to continue to provide information from existing and ongoing assessments as well as on progress made towards previously agreed global environmental goals to guide future policy debates at the Assembly;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director to further explore ways of communicating key scientific findings of the assessment work of the United Nations Environment Programme in all United Nations languages towards citizens, policymakers, the media and the research community in order to support informed decision-making at all levels;

3. *Also requests* the Executive Director to promote a strong science-policy interface by expanding partnerships with centres of excellence and research programmes, promoting integrated and peer-reviewed environmental assessments and policy analysis and working closely with member States, business and experts to establish up-to-date quality-assured data flows;

4. *Further requests* the Executive Director to foster collaboration with s multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, relevant United Nations agencies and programmes and scientific panels for joint efforts to strengthen the science-policy interface and provide tools for integrated approaches and informed decision-making;

5. *Reiterates* the request to the Executive Director to present a gap analysis report on environmental data, information and assessments as well as recommendations on policy instruments for a strengthened science-policy interface with recommendations to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session;

Strengthening the environmental dimension of sustainable development

6. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to provide expert input on the environmental dimension in relation to sustainable development goals in accordance with the Rio+20 outcome;

7. *Also requests* the Executive Director to work closely with relevant United Nations bodies, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, on the production of the Global Sustainable Development Report;

Assessments

8. *Requests* the Executive Director, within the programme of work and budget, to undertake the preparation of the sixth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), supported by UNEP Live, with the scope, objectives and procedures of GEO-6 to be defined by a transparent global intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation informed by document UNEP/EA.1/INF/14, resulting in a scientifically credible, peer-reviewed GEO-6, and its accompanying summary for policymakers, to be endorsed by the United Nations Environment Assembly no later than 2018;

9. *Also requests* the Executive Director to consult with all United Nations Environment Programme regions regarding their priorities to be taken up in the global assessment;

10. *Further requests* the Executive Director, within the existing programme of work, to contribute to the dissemination and outreach of the findings of relevant scientific panels, bodies and processes under the auspices of intergovernmental organizations in order to amplify diffusion among policymakers and the public to the maximum possible extent;

11. *Reiterates* the request to the Executive Director to strengthen the policy relevance of GEO reports by measuring the progress towards the achievement of the previously agreed global environmental goals and targets and to inform relevant global processes and meetings where progress towards these agreed goals and targets will be discussed;

UNEP Live

12. *Encourages* Governments, major groups and stakeholders, United Nation specialized agencies and programmes the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements and international and regional scientific bodies to engage in the future development of UNEP Live and share appropriate, credible and quality-assured data and information resources to support the environmental dimension of sustainable development assessment processes, which shall be accessible via the UNEP Live platform;

13. *Requests* the Executive Director to prepare, within the programme of work and budget and in consultation with Governments, United Nations agencies and programmes, the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements and international and regional scientific bodies, a long-term plan for the development and use of UNEP Live, with particular reference to its contribution to future GEO reports, future assessment modalities, stakeholder engagement, institutional networking and partnership activities, content development, technology support and capacity-building, particularly for developing countries and taking into account the existing scientific work and processes of UNEP and to present this plan to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session;

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14. *Requests* the Executive Director to undertake, at the request of member States, capacity-building and technology support for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to improve their data collection management and assessment including strengthening the indigenous and local knowledge systems and practices, as appropriate, for the implementation of the present resolution;

15. *Invites* Governments and others in a position to do so to provide financial support for the implementation of the present resolution, particularly in the area of technology support, data infrastructure and capacity-building so that developing countries can engage effectively and take advantage of the benefits of platforms such as UNEP Live;

16. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session on the implementation of the present resolution.